

Simulated Field Trips

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The Simulated Field Trip session offered resource managers an opportunity to “show” Symposium attendees their resource areas. One presentation had a national focus, two examined recreational and cultural issues in Alaska, another focused on management of a National Forest in southern California, and the last presentation looked at recreational opportunities at a National Forest in Washington. The session was moderated by Linda Hecker, USDA Forest Service.

National Focus

Joe Meade’s **“Universal Design and the Outdoor Recreation Environment”** simulated field trip was designed to raise audience awareness of access to outdoor settings. It addressed national efforts to establish universal design guidelines for outdoor recreation settings. The main premise behind the development of these guidelines was the interrelationship of recreation settings, customer expectations, and levels of accessibility. Dynamic slides illustrated the concept of universal design, which is to provide facilities, programs and services that foster a sense of dignity, independence, and social integration. A diversity of visitors, activities, and recreation settings (i.e. Urban/Rural, Roaded Natural, Semi-Primitive, and Primitive) were shown, including people in wheelchairs rappelling from rock cliffs, anglers, campers, hikers, and boaters. Part of the simulated field trip included exposure to new, state-of-the-art ultra light outdoor sports equipment for individuals with mobility disabilities. The presentation challenged participants to promote access for all to America’s Great Outdoors.

Alaska

Two simulated field trips offered views of resource use in Alaska. Geneen Granger’s **“The Many Cultural Uses of the Alaska Resource Area”** looked at issues related to culturally specific uses of natural resources in Alaska. Patrick Reed, F. Clark, L. Ziemann, and S. Randall’s **“Born of Ice: A Simulated Field Trip Through the Chugach National Forest”** focused on the Chugach National Forest in Alaska. This Forest is the Nation’s northernmost and the second largest in the National Forest System. Its unique recreation opportunities and settings draw visitors from around the world and accommodate more than 16 million visits annually. Here Forest visitors may see glaciers and watch whales in the beautiful Prince William Sound, visit the rich wildlife habitat of the Copper River Delta, and fish the rivers and coasts for four species of salmon. They may camp, hike, hunt, kayak, downhill and cross-country ski, study the natural

and cultural history of Alaska, or just relax--all amid spectacular mountain and coastal scenery. Managing the recreational opportunities in the Chugach is truly a challenge, due to factors such as the Forest’s size and remoteness, Federal statute provisions, the Alaskan transportation infrastructure, changing land ownership status, the growth of all forms of tourism, traditional and subsistence resource use issues, and even oil spills.

California

Joan Wynn’s **“Armchair Tour of the Cleveland National Forest”** focused on the many opportunities presented on the Cleveland National Forest in southern California. The National Forest covers 600,000 acres in San Diego, Riverside, and Orange Counties and many management issues are related to the proximity to urban areas. The land is predominantly chaparral, with steep canyons and intermittent streams, oak woodland meadows, Jeffrey and Coulter pine stands, and peaks up to 6,140 feet in the Santa Ana, Palomar and Laguna mountain ranges. Employees there manage campgrounds, other recreation sites, four wildernesses, wildlife habitat, range, watershed and soils, timber, fire prevention and protection, cultural resources, lands and special uses, communication sites, roads and trails, and more. Support programs include budget and fiscal management, personnel, civil rights, health and safety, fleet and facilities maintenance, computers, communications, and public affairs. Attention is currently focused on managing ecosystem diversity and valuable open space in southern California, protecting threatened and endangered species, and managing some of the last remaining large parcels of land used by wildlife. The increasing population in San Diego, Orange, and Riverside counties means a growing demand for recreation opportunities such as picnicking, camping, hiking, riding bicycles, and off-road vehicles.

Washington

Sue Lampe’s **“Defining the Human Dimension in the Lewis Integrated Resources Analysis Project”** simulated field trip focused on the Mt. Adams Ranger District on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in Washington. The Forest is conducting an Integrated Resource Analysis (IRA) on an estimated 21,000 acre planning area. Within the IRA area, about 44 miles of road are closed, restricting motorized vehicle access into about 60 percent of the IRA area. This area is commonly referred to as the Lone Butte Wildlife Emphasis Area and is allocated to several resource uses, including wildlife, recreation, and timber harvesting. The closure was implemented in 1988 with the purpose of

reducing harassment of elk from vehicle traffic. Since then, conflicting issues have resulted over resource use of the area. Timber industry is concerned that the closed area restricts land availability, making the 12,000 acre unavailable for timber harvest. Many recreationists perceive the area to be a wildlife and recreation area where timber harvesting would not occur unless it benefits wildlife habitat. The IRA process allows for the analysis of landscape functions for organisms which “use” the landscape, including humans.

The human “dimension” includes spiritual, ethical, cultural, historic, esthetic, economic, and social concerns. Often, the human dimension of project planning has stopped at the analysis of its ability to provide timber or aesthetic values. The aim of the IRA will be to incorporate more information on the human components of the landscape, and then in turn contribute to a model that can be used Forest-wide in other IRA’s.